

St Nicholas Hurst Parish Council

IT and Email Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 St Nicholas Hurst Parish Council (SNHPC) recognises the importance of effective and secure information technology (IT) and email usage in supporting its business, operations and communications. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Council's Data Protection Policy.
- 1.2 This policy outlines the guidelines and responsibilities for the appropriate use of IT resources and email by council members, employees, volunteers and contractors.

2. Scope

- 2.1 The policy applies to all individuals who use SNHPC's IT resources, including computers, networks, software, devices, data, and email accounts.

3. Acceptable use of IT resources and email accounts

- 3.1 SNHPC's IT resources and email accounts are to be used for official council-related activities and tasks only. All users must adhere to ethical standards, respect copyright and intellectual property rights, and avoid accessing inappropriate or offensive content.

4. Device and software usage

- 4.1 Where possible authorised devices, and applications will be provided by SNHPC for work related tasks.
- 4.2 Unauthorised installation of software on authorised devices, including personal software is strictly prohibited due to security concerns.

5. Data Management and Data Security

- 5.1 All sensitive and confidential SNHPC data should be stored and transmitted securely using approved methods. Regular data backups should be performed to prevent data loss, and secure data destruction methods should be used when necessary, in accordance with SNHPC's Data Protection and Data Retention Policies.

6. Network and Internet Usage

- 6.1 SNHPC's network and internet connections should be used responsibly and efficiently for official purposes. Downloading and sharing copyrighted material without proper authorisation is prohibited.

7. Email communication

- 7.1 Email accounts provided by SNHPC are for official communications only. Emails should be professional and respectful in tone. Confidential or sensitive information must not be sent via email unless it is encrypted.
- 7.2 Do not download any attachments or click any links before verifying the source.

8. Password and account security

- 8.1 SNHPC users are responsible for maintaining the security of their accounts and passwords. Passwords should be strong and not shared with others. Regular password changes are encouraged to enhance security in accordance with the council's data protection policy.

9. Mobile devices and remote working

- 9.1 Mobile devices provided by SNHPC should be secured with passcodes and/or biometric authentication. When working remotely, users should follow the same security practices as if they were in the office.

10. Email monitoring

- 10.1 SNHPC reserves the right to monitor email communications to ensure compliance with this policy and relevant laws. Monitoring will be conducted in accordance with the Data Protection Act and GDPR.

11. Retention and Archiving

- 11.1 Emails should be retained and archived in accordance with the council's data retention and protection policies and in accordance with any legal and regulatory requirements. Regularly review and delete unnecessary emails to maintain an organised inbox.

12. Reporting Security Incidents

- 12.1 Any suspected security breaches or incidents should be reported immediately to the data controller, clerk@hurstparishcouncil.gov.uk, for investigation and resolution. Report any email related security incidents or breaches immediately.

13. Training

- 13.1 SNHPC will provide regular training and resources to educate users about IT security best practices, privacy concerns, and technology updates. All employees and councillors will receive regular training on email security and best practices.

14. Compliance and consequences

- 14.1 Any breaches in this IT and email policy will be investigated and any action arising will follow the council's disciplinary procedures.

15. Policy review

- 15.1 This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure its relevance and effectiveness. Updates may be made to address emerging technology trends and security measures.

16. Contacts

- 16.1 For any queries with reference to this policy, please contact clerk@hurstparishcouncil.gov.uk.
- 16.2 All members of staff and councillors are responsible for the safety and security of SNHPC's IT and email systems. By adhering to this IT and Email Policy, SNHPC aim to create a secure and efficient IT environment.

17. Essential Resources

- 17.1 Other useful information relating to this subject can be found in the Hampshire ALC Member Area:**

Hampshire ALC Key Topic: Data Protection
Hampshire ALC Key Topic: Dealing with Complaints
Hampshire ALC Key Topic: Data Retention
Hampshire ALC Key Topic: Digital and Data Compliance
Hampshire ALC Key Topic: Recommended policies and procedures

Hampshire ALC Template: Data Protection Policy
Hampshire ALC Template: Data Retention Policy

Practitioners Guide 2025

Signed: *David Boyd*

Vice Chair

3/3/26